

THE AGRICULTURAL PROCESS

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crop. Sweet potatoes can be grown in either cold or hot weather and on either wet or dry land, although somewhat wet, sandy soil grows the best and largest potatoes. Too much rain during the growing season will ruin the plant. For this crop a seedbed is prepared, and the seedlings are transferred into mounds in a large field, where the potatoes mature until they are harvested. In Hsin Hsing sweet potatoes are grown in two different seasons. The early crop is planted around mid-May and harvested between mid-November and mid-January, the late crop is planted around late October and harvested from mid-January through mid-March.

In the Hsin Hsing village area as in much of rural Taiwan, the sweet potato is a standard part of the diet. And although it is an important food for human consumption, it is probably even more important as a food for animals. A large part of the sweet potato crop is sliced or shredded, dried in the farmer's courtyard by women and children, and then stored for later consumption by humans and livestock. Villagers who harvest a large sweet potato crop on portions of their dry land usually save only part of it for their own future use; they sell the remainder for cash to other farmers in the surrounding area.

In dry-land cultivation two crops, such as the sweet potato and the soybean, are often planted side by side in alternate rows and allowed to mature in this way for the entire growing season. This system of planting is a variation of the *hutze* or interplanting system and is commonly employed for the third crop in Hsin Hsing and the surrounding area. The system "involves planting a crop in the field a few weeks before the harvest of the previous crop, [and] makes more intensive use of the land" (Chang, 1954:4). It extends the growing season and also gives the young plants a good start while the weather is still mild. For example, a few weeks before the mature second crop is harvested, the third crop is planted between its rows. This can be done even when the second crop is wet-rice, since water is not needed in the paddy fields in the last few weeks of growth.

Because operating expenses are high, as is the general cost of living today, and because the villagers do not have enough land to till, many find it increasingly difficult to make ends meet by growing only the standard rice crops. In such cases they have two alternatives; they can go to Taipei to work and earn extra income, or they can use their small amount of land in such a way as to obtain the largest possible income from it. The latter alternative is preferred by many who have found the best possible answer in the cultivation of vegetables for market sale.

It is common for farmers cultivating irrigated land to substitute other crops for rice on a portion of their land. Such substitute crops,

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[262] fowl, although some of them, especially young girls, prefer not to kill fowl. When the throat is cut the blood is collected in a bowl of uncooked rice and later made into a kind of soup.

231 A few villagers also keep some rabbits and goats. Rabbits are used
[432] for food on festive occasions and are also sold in the market. Goats are
[782] kept in preparation for a marriage, when they, as well as a pig or two, are slaughtered, used in the religious ceremonial, and later fed to the guests.

231 As shown in Table 12, in 1958 there were seventeen water buffalo in
262 Hsin Hsing village. These are kept strictly as work animals and are not considered as food by most of the villagers. This is perhaps related to the feeling built up over the years toward this useful, hardworking, and tame animal. Villagers say that they have no such feeling for pigs, which do nothing all their lives but prepare for the day when they will be eaten, but some of the village women actually become ill at the thought of eating beef. On the other hand, many village men, especially those who have worked or served in the army outside the village area, boast of how they have often eaten beef.

231 In the village, young boys and sometimes old men take care of the
857 water buffalo when the animal is not working in the field. The young boy is in fact referred to as the "cow boy" and can often be seen riding on the animal's back or leading it along the narrow paths between the fields where the buffaloes can graze. In the market town of Chi Hu, five
[443] miles southeast of Hsin Hsing, there is a special market where water buffaloes are bought and sold on two fixed days each month.

AGRICULTURAL LINKS BEYOND THE VILLAGE

433 Most crops are not kept in the village very long after they are
434 harvested. The bulk of them is used to pay the farmers' operating expenses or is sold. Some vegetables are preserved for future use as
251 food for the family and for livestock. For example, sweet potatoes, radishes, and cabbages are cut up, dried in the sun, and then stored in sacks. In addition, a small quantity of fresh sweet potatoes is frequently stored in the house, also to be used as food for family and livestock. The potatoes are piled on the floor in the corner of one room
[178] of the house. It is common to use a corner of the main room of the house—the *kung t'ing*, the ancestral-worship room—for this purpose. Thus, besides the religious altar in the rear, one frequently finds in this room all kinds of stored valuables such as rice, fertilizer, and some
[136] of the farm implements. The rats, which frequently destroy part of the crop while it is growing in the field, also take their toll of the food stored in the house.

000 Those villagers who grow cash vegetable crops usually market them
A [See category 116, p. 89--Analyst]

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966

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in three market towns or cities: Yuan Lin, almost fifteen miles from the village; Chang-hua, about ten miles; and Taichung, about twenty-five miles. Often some of the men in Hsin Hsing who grow the same vegetables cooperate in the marketing operation. Since the market price is usually about the same in each one of the three markets, the men agree in advance where each will go to sell his vegetables. This prevents any one market from being flooded with a vegetable and thus lowering the price. The choice of market is arbitrary, and if one man happens to get a better price for his vegetables, he is considered lucky, and no more is thought about it. Perhaps the next time the men will change markets.

If the villager has a large enough load to take to the wholesale market, it may take him several days to sell his vegetables. In that event he usually sleeps in the market unless he happens to have some relative such as a *ch'in ch'i* in the town with whom he can stay; a hotel is considered too expensive. A few villagers ship vegetables like peppers or cabbages by truck freight to more distant markets in the cities of Kaohsiung or Taipei. This is done with the aid of a vegetable broker with whom they have made contact; he also takes care of the sale of the vegetables in the market for a percentage of the profit. The villager and the broker use the mails to maintain contact about prices and shipping arrangements. Although only a few villagers now work with a broker, it seems likely that more will adopt the method, for it permits the farmer to sell to the best advantage in different parts of the island.

After a farmer harvests his rice crop he dries it in the sun and stores it either in bamboo-and-mud bins in the house or else in very large, round, white-plastered bamboo or wooden storage bins in front of the house. This latter method is mostly used by those farmers who produce a large amount of rice. The rice is held in these storage places until it is time to make payment in kind for land rent, land taxes, or for fertilizer. The number of these large rice bins that now go unused and unrepaired is evidence that the villagers are right when they say they were able to keep and store much more rice for later sale on the market under the Japanese.

After the operating expenses are paid and any surplus is sold, the remaining rice is stored unmilled for the family's use. As it is needed, the villagers have their rice milled, usually in the next village, at a cost of about NT \$2 for every one hundred *chin* of rice. Of one hundred *chin* of unmilled rice, approximately twenty *chin* is lost when the rice is husked and polished. The husks then belong to the mill, but the farmer can take home the product of the polishing, the ground rice powder, to feed to pigs and other livestock. The farmer usually purchases the husks from the mills to use as fuel for cooking stoves.

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1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966

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work. Sometimes, however, a man who is building an addition to his house may just hire a few village men during the agricultural slack season and pay them a fixed wage for the day's work, about NT \$15-20 a day.

Today only a few villagers grow sugarcane. The period of harvesting for cane varies according to the time of planting. But usually it comes during what is normally a slack farm season. The sugar company, which contracts with the farmer to have him grow sugarcane on his land, regularly sends specialists to the fields to determine when the sugarcane is at its peak of readiness for harvesting. Usually, a field planted in sugarcane is relatively large, and may require a group of as many as thirty or forty people to harvest just under one *chhi* of land. The group is generally hired from one of the very large villages in the area that is populous enough to supply the entire team. This labor team works as a single group of men, women, and young people, which is broken up into smaller crews according to function, such as cutting the cane, gathering it and tying it in bundles, or putting it on the oxcarts which take it to the railway line for shipment to the sugar company factory. The whole group is paid a lump sum for division among the members and is fed only refreshments in the field, not a whole meal. Hsin Hsing villagers are very seldom members of a sugar-harvesting labor gang.

THE FARMERS' ASSOCIATION: AN "EXTERNAL" FORCE

The Farmers' Association has been important in the Taiwanese rural area since Japanese times. Under the Japanese regime the local farmers owned stocks or shares in the local district associations, and Hsin Hsing villagers feel that the association was run partly by the Japanese government and partly by the farmers. In those days the government attempted to introduce new farm techniques and crops to the farmers through the association.

Today, the work of the local district Farmers' Association has become more important than ever. The Pu Yen Hsiang Farmers' Association has several large buildings which are used for offices, meeting rooms, classrooms, and warehouses for the storage of rice and farm equipment. The provincial Food Bureau lends some financial support to the association for the building of the warehouses where the large amounts of grain collected from the farmers as tax are stored for the bureau by the association. Almost all the villagers who cultivate land and are therefore classed primarily as farmers belong to the Farmers' Association. In order to become a member, the farmer must purchase at least one share of association stock at a price of NT \$8, a low fee which virtually guarantees that all farmers will become members. On

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5

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ABOVE: Stacking rice
straw after harvest.
RIGHT: Grinding glu-
tinous rice for holi-
day cakes.



RELIGION AND MAGIC

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offers an acceptable explanation of the failure within the framework of the system.

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THE ANCESTRAL-WORSHIP ROOM OR KUNG T'ING

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The village family or *tsu* perform most religious and magical activities in the *kung t'ing* where the statues of the gods and the ancestral tablets are housed. This is a central room in every village house (see house diagram in Chapter 2), whether it is a large *tsu* house with many apartments belonging to component families or the small house of a nuclear family. Some households which reside in the apartments of a large *tsu* house reserve a small part of one of their own rooms as a kind of *kung t'ing* where they maintain ancestral tablets bearing the names of their own deceased parents or their own most recent ancestors. However, these households continue to share in the maintenance of the main *kung t'ing* of the *tsu* where a tablet recording all the names of the *tsu* ancestors is housed.

The *kung t'ing* of a Hsin Hsing village house is fairly representative of those found in the homes of the area and the homes of urban Taiwanese. (Today, usually it is only the mainlanders in Taiwan who do not have such a *kung t'ing* set up in their homes.) The appointments of the room include an altar which stands against the wall opposite the main entrance. Above the altar may hang two calligraphy scrolls which flank a scroll depicting the Buddhist goddess Kuan Yin. Statues of the main Taoist gods, a few in glass boxes, and the ancestral tablets stand on top of the altar. Incense receptacles and wine cups are placed before the statues of the gods. In front of the altar stands a large table on which food offerings are placed during worship. On ritual occasions this table is moved away from the altar and used as a dining table. The last appointment is an incense pot which hangs from the ceiling a few feet from the entrance to the *kung t'ing*, wherein the spirit of T'ien Kung, the highest god, is said to reside. He is not represented in statue form.

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In many respects the care and function of the *kung t'ing* indicate the nature of village religion and its relation to other aspects of village life. Although this room is the most important single site for the performance of ritual activities, it is by no means limited to "sacred" events. The family entertains guests here on both religious and non-religious occasions, and it also serves as a meeting place for the family to sit and talk. Because it contains an electric light bulb, children play or do their homework here, and women gather here to work on fiber hats. Perhaps the most "profane" of the uses to which this room is put, particularly if the *kung t'ing* belongs to only one or a few households, is its use as a storage place for sacks of rice or fertilizer and mounds of sweet potatoes.

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3: Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien

Taiwan AD6

The City and the Market Town

In the few arcades streets closed to automobiles in the United States and England, one is conscious of the sound of feet on concrete, but in Taipei, even though the wooden clogs of the poor make much more noise than Western leather, one is conscious of voices. Children cry, women gossip, store-keepers greet friends and customers, peddlers inform passers-by of the quality and freshness of their wares, pedi-cab drivers shout warnings to pedestrians about to step in front of them, neighbors discuss the bargains they've found, and not infrequently family quarrels are presented for the world to judge. Winter or summer, day or night, there is always the smell of smoke—coal smoke, charcoal smoke, fuel oil. Often it is delicately embroidered with a thread of incense coming from a family altar in the back of a store or from a small temple tucked down a side alley. The air is heavy with smells, not just smoke, but the oily smells of cooking, the salty smell of drying fish, the sharp tang of pickled vegetables, the elegant smell of sandalwood being fashioned into boxes and furnishings for the rich, and always somewhere in every neighborhood the smell of the "honey-wagon," a slow moving tank cart that goes from house to house to collect "night-soil."

In 1957 my husband and I arrived in Taipei and spent the better part of a year there, studying Mandarin. The following year, the majority of which I was forced to spend in the United States because of the illnesses of my parents, my husband searched the island for a suitable village in which to carry out the anthropological field project that had brought him to Taiwan. I returned not to the noisy, jostling city but to a small, quiet village on the banks of the Tamsui River. In its way of life, Peihotien was far from Taipei; in miles, the distance was not great. With luck and a feeling of urgency, the trip from the Taipei train station to our doorstep could be made in an hour, half by train and half by foot. The train rumbled through Taipei suburbs, a small city, a couple of small market towns, and much open paddy land before it dropped us in the market town of Tapu. Tapu is the buying, selling, repairing, and general servicing town for a number of villages, including the one in which I was to live.

The Tapu train station opens onto a little square; the square in turn opens onto the main street of the town. I have never seen the square completely empty, not even in the heavy rains that break the heat of summer afternoons. There is a man who sells hot noodles from a little cart, another with fresh fruit, another with newspapers and gaudy magazines.

cans salvaged from the garbage dumps of American military installations. In the next store a pall of dust hangs on everything. This is a small coal-kerosene-rice store, and the debris from the hand-operated rice polishing mill makes everything, even the black coal, a shade lighter. Toward the back there are baskets of charcoal and bundles of neatly cut twigs and branches, carefully graded and tied. Against the back wall are stacked bottles of wine and beer, their necks entwined with cheap handmade rope. The piquant, not quite fresh smell in the air comes from next door, the store we called the pickle shop for want of a better name. Huge jars of pickles—pickled cabbage, pickled radishes, pickled eggplants, even pickled eggs—fill the front of the store, the more expensive delicacies displayed in glass jars, the more routine in heavy, waist-high earthenware crocks. Only a few are preserved in vinegar. Most are salted and allowed to season for several months, or dried in the hot, baking summer sun, or soaked in soy sauce, herbs, or wine. The unlighted rear of the store is brightened somewhat by the gaudy labels on a few shelves of canned foods. They are expensive, not as tasty as the local product, and often dangerous with age and contamination. Nearer the front are the precious tins of powdered milk, a mother's only solution to a dry breast in this damp climate where dairy cows quickly succumb to tuberculosis.

The heart of the town, or at least the source of the greatest commotion each forenoon, is the roofed food market. The market would be difficult to locate were it not for the overflow of shoppers and farmers. The entrance is little more than a narrow alley between two store-fronts, an alley made even narrower by the half dozen farmers squatting there amid their baskets of produce. These are men who can't afford to rent stalls under the protection of the roof or farmers who happen that day to have some surplus vegetables or a sudden shortage of cash. Just a few steps down the alley is the open market shed itself and what seems to be a disorganized profusion of produce heaped on trays, piled in baskets, spread on tables, or simply stacked on the bare packed earth: fresh onions, cucumbers, garlic, an infinite variety of melons and squash, eggplants, bamboo shoots, and occasionally fresh mushrooms brought in by some enterprising merchant with Taipei contacts. Scattered between and on top of the vegetables are bananas, papayas, pineapples, guavas, and a few precious apples imported from Japan. Adding a sinister note to the confusion of produce are the meatstalls with carcasses of pigs hanging on huge hooks,

The Village

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Not all of the people in Peihotien have seen ghosts and certainly 775
not all of them believe in ghosts, but there is not a perfect correlation
between a man's belief in ghosts and his level of sophistication in
other matters. One of my favorite scoffers in the village is a no-non-
sense woman about fifty years old. After listening to some men tell me
about the habits of ghosts, she laughed and told me what she thought
about ghosts. "I'm always walking around at night and I've never
once seen a ghost. When I used to gamble, I wandered around even
more at night. I would go all the way to Nanhotien to gamble, come
back at midnight for more money, and walk all the way back again. I
never met a ghost or even worried about one. Remember where old
Ong hung himself on that tree behind their house? Just a few days
after his suicide we were gambling at Tan's house. A policeman came
and we all had to run and the only way was under that tree. None of
us held back. If there was a ghost there, it would been trampled
to death we were running so fast. When you are gambling you aren't
afraid of the King of Hell. How could you be afraid of a ghost?"

Considering the affinity of ghosts for isolated spots, it seems 361
unlikely that many could stick it out for long in Peihotien. There is 311
very little land within the village that isn't tamed by houses or pig
pens or kitchen gardens. Unused land is more or less public property
and is crossed and recrossed by dozens of people each day. The
square directly behind the house in which we lived is a good example.
It is flanked on three sides by houses and on the fourth by the main
path through the village. A family who supplements their income by [434]
making noodles has set up stretching racks in one corner. Years of use
has made the surface of the square as hard and smooth as concrete,
ideal for a drying ground. During certain seasons its entire upper half [251]
is carpeted with fat rice grains which are turned every few hours for
uniform drying. Since the square is public, the families who use it must [235]
keep a child stationed there to drive off stray chickens and ducks. Two or
three times each summer traveling medicine peddlers set up their make- 443
shift stages in the square, give free performances, and then try to sell [278]
their wares to the crowds they attract. Sometimes their acts are elabor-
ated by costumes and a squawking loudspeaker; more often they are sim-
ple, lighted by a single electric globe rented from one of the families
on the square. During the day a peddler may cycle into the village
and spread out his merchandise in the square. The women often do not
buy anything and leave the poor peddler to fold his goods back into
his box and pedal off to the next village.

744 plain water, few boil it the full ten minutes. There is no question about what is proper but people just do not want to take the time or trouble and a few say that it would cost too much for the fuel to boil all drinking water a full ten minutes. Similarly, mosquito nets are not kept in good repair although infected bites are common.

356 Houses are quite messy and dirty. People will clean them as required to pass government inspection, but grudgingly. There are two values operating against cleanliness. A cluttered house is a sign of wealth or economic wellbeing. Also, a baby god is thought to hide somewhere in the room of a pregnant woman during the period from conception to birth. Disturbing his resting place may have serious detrimental effects on the baby. Since a woman is not likely to know the moment she becomes pregnant, the bedrooms are often neglected in cleaning. The fastidious Japanese also worked hard in Talei Li at promoting clean houses with little success.

262 Food handling techniques are comparatively good.
• 251 No raw foods other than fruits with a thick skin such as
744 citrus or bananas are consumed. Almost every family now covers left-over foods with a round wooden basket with a screened top to keep out insects in accordance with suggestions of the farmers' association and government health agents. This is a new practice instituted during the last

- 251 eight years. Although farmers have been relatively will-
262 ing to accept the recommendations of agricultural experts,
744 the government agents and farmers' association officials
concerned with sanitation have had more success with women
than men. Male and female agents in the farmers' associa-
tion in Hsin Tien both agree that unless the woman is per-
suaded, few changes will be made in the kitchen. The
officials and villagers alike claimed that no matter what
a man said, a woman ran the kitchen as she pleased. Most
food is eaten the day it is acquired and pork especially,
is never kept overnight. This custom requires daily mar-
keting.

- 164 Colds and flu are very common in winter. Almost
everyone has periodic intestinal disorders and skin infec-
tions are endemic. Foot and hand infections are occasion-
ally very severe. Working in the paddy fields with their
[241] load of human excreta in solution is particularly dangerous
with open cuts. Injuries such as broken bones are most
common among children and men who work in the local coal
mines.

- 759 Treatment of disease and injury may involve many
756 distinct techniques. There are a great variety of profes-
sional medical practitioners such as Western-style doctors,
traditional Chinese doctors, various folk specialties such
as acupuncture, different shamans, and temple priests who
[562] furnish charms to drink. Most professionals are males but
midwives are invariably females.

443 local stores (20% discount) or to the nearby mine dormi-
tories (10% less than town prices with free delivery).

Subsistence Crops

- 243 By this category, I refer to those items grown for
244 home consumption. A major item is sweet potatoes which
can be grown on dry land in small scattered locations.
Occasionally, they are planted at the end of the second
crop in a paddy field but in this case, it is not possible
to plant the first rice crop the following year. However,
the yield is high and part of the field can be used for
262 the rice seedlings. Sweet potatoes are an important part
252 of the local diet, particularly in the form of a fried
231 sweet-potato pancake, steamed, or as a kind of mush. Al-
so, both the leaves and potatoes are excellent for animal
• 251 fodder. Sliced in chips and dried in the sun, sweet po-
tatoes can be readily preserved for future consumption.
244 When sweet potatoes, which take six months to mature, are
planted after the second rice crop, raddish is inter-
[251] planted in a multiple cropping technique. Raddishes,
which only take 60 days to mature, are dried and preserved
with salt or pickled.

- 244 Almost every house, even those with no other agri-
cultural activities, will have a small nearby vegetable
garden. Several of the very small plots of land away from
the households are also devoted to vegetables, but not any